

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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LONDON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1807. [PRICE 10D.]

"I congratulate the company on the important triumph, which we have obtained in the election of Mr. Sheridan; a triumph, which is the more to be rejoiced in as it affords a practical evidence of the advantages of a popular government and a popular election. The people have manifested their independence without tumult; and the friends of government are triumphant *without any exertion of undue influence!*"—MR. WHITBREAD'S Speech at the Thatched House, Nov. 19, 1806.

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## TO THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF THE CITY AND LIBERTIES OF WESTMINSTER. LETTER VII.

GENTLEMEN,

When, in the conclusion of my last letter to you (at page 204), I took the liberty to exhort you to remain, not only steadfast in your political principles, but unwearied in your perseverance to recover the complete enjoyment of the rights and liberties, for which our fathers so long, so gallantly, so virtuously, and so successfully struggled, I intended to leave the Sheridans to the animadversions of the public, and never again, at any rate, to make their conduct the subject of a letter to you; but, a recent decision in the House of Commons, touching the result of the late election for Westminster, in which decision your interest and honour are deeply concerned, has induced me to depart from this intention.

Upon the occasion here referred to, to wit, on the 20th instant, a motion was made for *deferring* the order, before made by the House, for taking into consideration your petition complaining of an undue election for your city; and, observe, that this motion was made by Mr. Sheridan himself. The day, which was fixed upon, by this once bold defier of you, was, the 14th of April, nearly two months after the time before fixed upon by the House. After some debate this motion was put to the vote, and, the House having divided, there appeared 167 for it, and 12 against it.

The grounds upon which this motion was made and supported, were, 1st, that Mr. Sheridan's Counsel would be upon the circuit, and, of course, unable to attend; and 2d, that, when the former postponement was agreed to by him, it was agreed to upon the condition, clearly understood, that a further postponement should take place on account of the circuit. That Mr. Sheridan should have set up a pretence like this, or

any other pretence, by which the day of trial might be put off, is no matter of surprise; but, that Lord Howick, the famous parliamentary reformer, should have gone upon the same grounds, should have supported the motion, and should have called forth his majority to cause the delay to take place; this really is matter of surprise, especially when we consider, that, in the very recent instance of the petition from the county of Londonderry, this same Lord Howick (late Mr. Grey), backed by his friend and brother reformer, Mr. Whitbread, set their faces against even an hour's delay, though it was applied for upon fair and reasonable grounds.

As to the pretence, that Mr. Sheridan's Counsel would be absent upon the circuit, it never was before, I believe, and certain I am that it never ought to be, listened to for a moment, in such a case; for, if this were to become a precedent, to what time might not a ministerial member of parliament defer the consideration of a petition against him? The *absence* of counsel, from whatever cause, whether of sickness or any other, would, in such case, be a ground for postponement; and, thus, by the votes of the minister's majority, the electors of any place might remain unrepresented, might see the person, *against* whom they had voted, disposing of their money, and making laws to govern them, for years together. The circuit! What is the business of the circuit, compared with the subject of your petition? Besides, is it credible, Gentlemen, that, from all the counsellors at the bar, nearly six hundred in number, there could be any difficulty in selecting two, fully competent to the task, to attend a committee of the House; more especially when we consider, that Mr. Sheridan was so conscious of the innocence of himself and his agents, as to have treated your petition with ridicule? Was it for a man, conscious of the rectitude of his proceedings; a man who had set the complaint against him at defiance; and who had treated it with contempt and mockery; was it for such a man to beg for a delay of his trial;

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upon the ground of apprehension that he might suffer from the want of counsel sufficiently acquainted with his case? You will have observed, too, gentlemen, that, in a *defence*, in a case of this sort, there can have been no *preparation*, at least of a *legal* kind. The defendant has yet to learn, *if he be innocent*, what are the facts which you have to produce against him. The two counsellors, therefore, whom he has employed, can, as yet, have taken no steps preparatory to the trial; and, of course, any other two counsellors, equally qualified in point of talent (and there are two hundred of such) would answer all his *lawful* purposes full as well as the two already employed, and now, unfortunately, upon the circuit, or going upon the circuit. You have alleged, in your petition that Mr. Sheridan's return to parliament was effected by bribery and corruption. If he be conscious of his innocence, what need has he of *arrangements* and *preparations*; and of what *lawful* kind can his preparations *possibly* be? He has, indeed, affected to believe, that your petition would not be persevered in; but, you, gentlemen, know as well as I, that not a word has fallen from any one connected with Mr. Paull, that could lead to such a belief; and, that, when the idea was, upon a former occasion thrown out, it was, without hesitation, positively contradicted by Lord Folkestone, to whom you and every independent man in the kingdom is so much indebted for his manly assertion of your rights, and whose having presented the petition was, of itself, a sufficient guarantee, that it would be steadily persevered in. If, therefore, between the 20th of December, when the petition was first presented, and the 24th of February, the time last fixed for taking it into consideration, Mr. Sheridan could not be *ready with his defence*, even without the aid of any counsellor at all, as little might he be expected to be prepared by the 14th of April. What, too, must be those proceedings, of which it requires so long a time to prepare a defence? Had Mr. Sheridan been the *attacking* party, and compelled to hunt after, and run down, evidence of such *secret* transactions as are generally connected with the arts of bribery and corruption, where, nine times out of ten, the guilty party is to be the source of information, there might have been some reason for delay; but, here, where the accused has nothing to seek for, and especially where innocence and purity are so vauntingly put forward, would it not be natural, that the party accused should court inquiry, at as early a moment as possible, in order to wipe off the stigma from his

character, and to convince the world, that the accusation was unjust? Compared with an object so desirable, what would have been the expence of seeing the two counsel not to go upon the circuit? For, though Mr. Sheridan might find such an expence inconvenient, there would, doubtless, have been no difficulty in raising the sum required, from the same source, whence was drawn, or rather, whence spontaneously flowed, the *thirteen thousand pound* subscription, lodged at the celebrated Davison's, for the purpose of *carrying on* Mr. Sheridan's election, and, of which subscription you will, I hope, never forget, that *Mr. Whitbread* was at the head. This former patriot, this zealous prosecutor of corruption, this reformer of parliament, is now, if the newspapers speak truth, occupied with a plan for reforming, not the House of Commons, but *the people!* That is the end, at which it *now* suits his purposes to begin! Instead of retrenching the enormous sinecures and pensions, of which he formerly complained; instead of endeavouring to lessen those taxes, which are the cause, and the sole cause, of the fearful and deplorable increase of paupers; instead of proposing any measure by which might be saved the ten thousand pounds a year, which the Sheridans draw from the labour of the people; instead of measures of this sort, he proposes *schools* and *badges* for the poor. They cry for bread, and he would give them a primer: they ask for freedom, and he would give them a badge. Never, Gentlemen, let us lose sight of this man. He has been, and he is, our worst enemy; as it is usual with apostates to be the most malicious persecutors.—As to the 2d ground, upon which the aforementioned motion of Mr. Sheridan was made and supported, namely, that, when the former postponement was agreed to by him, it was clearly understood, that a further postponement should take place on account of the circuit, nothing ever was more unfounded. The fact was, as stated by Lord Folkestone in this last debate, that Mr. Sheridan could, with difficulty, be brought to consent to any delay at all; and, what he said about the circuit was this: that, if the delay, then proposed, took place, the consideration of the petition would come on just at the time when the counsellors were all going upon the circuit, and that he supposed, *the petitioners* would then apply for a further postponement, as a decent way of letting the matter drop. Peter Moore (don't laugh, Gentlemen!); Peter Moore, the chairman of Mr. Sheridan's famed committee; the man who was selected as the fit instrument to publish a private and *garbled*

correspondence; this man is, by the newspapers, said to have observed, that he clearly understood, that a further postponement, on account of the circuit, was agreed upon; and that, if that had not been the case, he should have advised his "*Right Honourable*" Friend not to consent to the former postponement. Now, Gentlemen, this is the very man who so stretched his throat at the hustings and the dinners in extolling the purity of the proceedings of his party; and who had the impudence to assert, that, on the part of Mr. Paull, there were hundreds of bad votes! Who, that knew nothing of the man, would not suppose, that he would have panted for the moment, when, as nominee, or member of parliament, he might have scouted your complaints, and repaid you, in part, at least, for the contempt and scorn which you bestowed upon him? Patient Gentleman! He is willing to wait for the day of retribution with as much resignation as he waits for a place, even though his fellow labourer, Sir Philip Francis, (who, after having, by all the *secret* means in his power, urged Mr. Paull on to the prosecution of Lord Wellesley, went to Covent Garden, on the very first day of the election, and gave his vote against him) has got both a place and a ribbon. The proclamations, which, upon backs of letters, Sir Philip had prepared for his faithful and loyal people of Buenos Ayres, he may now tie up in his red ribbon, and lay them by upon some dry shelf; and, if he pleases, he may clap himself down by the side of them; but, as for Peter Moore, he has not yet done with us; and, I do hope, that we have not yet done with him.—With regard to the real motives from which this further delay has been moved for and supported, they will, I hope, be made manifest to the world in a very few days; and, if I am disappointed in this hope, Mr. Paull will, upon this occasion, have less spirit, than, upon all other occasions, he has discovered. But, without waiting for any developement as to probable motives, there is one fact, which, if I be correctly informed with respect to it, will, of itself, account for such great anxiety for procuring delay; and, that is, that it is intended to *prorogue the parliament some time in the month of May*. If this should be the case, and, as there are no tax-bills to pass, I do not see why it should not, the delay is, at once, sufficiently accounted for; because, then, it will be next to impossible, if the prorogation take place early in the month, for the petition to be decided on during this session of parliament. But, if this should so turn out, what shall we say of the part, which, accord-

ing to the newspaper reports, my Lord Howick has acted? He, who, at the beginning of the session, would not admit of a moment's delay in such cases; and who, even while he is supporting this motion, is made to say, that it is an extremely delicate thing to keep back decisions on such points? There was, indeed, a time, my Lord Howick, when the epithet *delicate* would not have been applied to it. There was a time, my lord, when you would not, in such terms, have spoken of such an act. Yes, Gentlemen, there was such a time, but that time is passed, never to return. Lord Howick will never again be the champion of the rights of the people.

Having now, Gentlemen, submitted to you all that I think it necessary to trouble you with, upon this subject, until, perhaps, some further proceedings in your case shall have taken place, I shall, for the present, conclude with earnestly exhorting you to bear in mind the injuries and insults you have received from our enemies; to remember those enemies by name; to count them over frequently, one by one; to ascertain, if possible, who were the persons that were most conspicuously hostile to you during the election; and, all this, that you may never, on any account, be induced to trust them again. Persevere, in the name of your country and your children I beseech you to persevere in your applications for redress; petition, even now, that the meditated delay may be shortened; neglect nothing; act as if the life of each individual of you was at stake; for, upon the issue of this contest, all that is dear in the life of a free and independent man will depend. With those sentiments of regard and respect, which your conduct during the recent election impressed upon my mind,

I remain,

Gentlemen,

Feb. 24,

Your faithful friend,

1807.

And obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. Since the above letter was written, the following Petition has been presented to the House of Commons, by Lord Folkestone, on the part of Mr. Paull: "The humble  
" Petition of James Paull, Esq. one of the  
" Candidates to represent the City of Westminster at the late Election for Members  
" of Parliament to serve for the said City,—  
" Sheweth, That at the said Election the  
" Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan was returned a member to serve in  
" parliament for the said city.—That  
" your Petitioner presented a Petition to  
" this Honourable House, against the Re-

" turn of the said R. B. Sheridan, charging  
 " him, among other things, with having  
 " procured the same by means of undue  
 " and illegal influence, by threats and me-  
 " naces, and by divers acts of bribery and  
 " corruption.—That the said Petition was  
 " appointed to be taken into consideration  
 " on the 24th day of this instant month of  
 " February.—That this Honourable House  
 " thought fit, at the instance of the said R.  
 " B. Sheridan, to postpone the consideration  
 " of the said Petition until the 14th day of  
 " April now next ensuing.—That your  
 " Petitioner has lately discovered that the  
 " said R. B. Sheridan, in defiance of the  
 " standing Orders of this House, and to the  
 " manifest subversion of every principle of  
 " justice, has, by divers nefarious ways and  
 " means, tampered with and endeavoured to  
 " corrupt, and has attempted to persuade  
 " and to deter and hinder, certain persons  
 " whom your Petitioner intended and still  
 " intends to examine, and who are and will  
 " be material witnesses upon the trial of the  
 " said Petition, from appearing on the day  
 " when the said Petition shall be heard, and,  
 " from giving their unbiassed, or any,  
 " testimony on behalf of your Petitioner,  
 " and against the said R. B. Sheridan.—  
 " That one Wm. Drake was and still is a  
 " material witness summoned on behalf of  
 " your petitioner, and that the said Wm.  
 " Drake having, on or about the 10th day  
 " of this instant February, informed the  
 " said R. B. Sheridan, that he had been so  
 " summoned, and having inquired of him  
 " the course he was to pursue, the said  
 " R. B. Sheridan told him to leave that  
 " business to him, that he would procure  
 " him a situation abroad, and would also  
 " provide for the father of the said Wm.  
 " Drake, and added, that the said Wm.  
 " Drake might have any money he pleased,  
 " and wished the said Wm. Drake to keep out  
 " of the way, and endeavoured to persuade  
 " the said Wm. Drake not to give, and to  
 " intimidate, and deter, and hinder him  
 " from giving complete and unbiassed testi-  
 " mony before the Select Committee of  
 " the facts known to him relative to the  
 " said election, and did offer to give money  
 " to the said Wm. Drake for him to pro-  
 " cure for the said R. B. Sheridan a certain  
 " letter, in the possession of one Emanuel  
 " Harris, and which letter the said Ema-  
 " nuel Harris had been required by an  
 " order of the right hon. the Speaker to  
 " produce before the said committee; and  
 " that the said R. B. Sheridan did also, on  
 " or about Thursday the 19th day of Fe-  
 " bruary instant, again offer the said Wm.

" Drake money, and a situation of profit,  
 " with the same view, and did likewise,  
 " on the last-mentioned day, endeavour to  
 " persuade one Thomas Weatherhead, not  
 " to give an unbiassed testimony on the  
 " trial of the said petition. And that one  
 " Alex. Johnstone, one Frederic Homan,  
 " one ——— Edwards, and divers others  
 " the agents and partizans of the said R. B.  
 " Sheridan, did also tamper with the said  
 " Wm. Drake, and endeavour to persuade  
 " and to deter, and to hinder him from giv-  
 " ing his unbiassed testimony before the said  
 " committee; and that the said Alex. John-  
 " stone and Frederic Homan did also en-  
 " deavour to persuade and induce the said  
 " Wm. Drake to procure the aforesaid let-  
 " ter from the said Emanuel Harris.—That  
 " the said R. B. Sheridan, by one Henry  
 " Burgess, one James Wallace, and one  
 " John Gallant, and divers others his agents  
 " and partizans, did also tamper with divers  
 " other witnesses summoned by your peti-  
 " tioner to give testimony on his behalf:  
 " and in particular that the said James  
 " Wallace and John Gallant did inform one  
 " Wm. Sperring, one Wm. Warren, one  
 " Jeremiah James, one John Pullen, one  
 " Daniel Richardson, one John Balam, and  
 " one Christopher Richardson, whom he  
 " knew had been so summoned, that it  
 " was intended to move this honourable  
 " house to postpone the consideration of  
 " the said petition until a future day, by  
 " which means the orders to attend the  
 " said committee, with which they had  
 " been served, would be invalid and of no  
 " use; and that if it were postponed but  
 " for one day there would be time for them  
 " all to get out of the way to avoid their being  
 " served a second time, and added, that  
 " when they had succeeded in putting it  
 " off, each person should have money to go  
 " out of the way to prevent his being  
 " summoned; and your petitioner has been  
 " informed and verily believes that the said  
 " William Sperring, Daniel Richardson,  
 " and William Warren are now out of the  
 " way, and have been persuaded and in-  
 " duced so to do by the means aforesaid.—  
 " That the said R. B. Sheridan, and the  
 " several persons, agents, and partizans,  
 " aforesaid, with divers others, have con-  
 " spired together, in manner aforesaid, and  
 " in divers other ways, for the purpose of  
 " depriving your petitioner of his just  
 " right, and preventing him from establish-  
 " ing by his witnesses before a committee  
 " of your Honourable House, his claim to  
 " represent the said City of Westminster.  
 " —All which transactions of the said R. B.

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" Sheridan, his agents, and partizans, are,  
 " to the great injury of your petitioner, in  
 " manifest violation of the standing  
 " orders of this Honourable House, in de-  
 " fiance of justice, in breach of the law,  
 " and to the utter destruction of equal  
 " trial.—Your petitioner therefore prays that  
 " he may be permitted to prove the facts  
 " above stated, at the bar of this Honour-  
 " ble House, that he may be heard by his  
 " counsel at the bar, and that this Honour-  
 " ble House will take its witnesses under its  
 " protection, and give such relief as in  
 " justice shall to this Honourable House  
 " seem fit. And your petitioner shall ever  
 " pray, &c."—JAMES PAULL.—*London,*  
*Feb. 25, 1807.*

Upon this there requires no comment. The honest part of mankind has only to read it, or hear it. On the proceedings in the House upon this occasion, as well as upon the former division, some remarks shall be offered in my next.

#### SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT. (Continued from page 295)—I. *Finance Plan.* II. *Barrack Abuses.* III. *Westminster Election.* IV. *Sugar Trade.* V. *Poor Laws.*

—I. Upon the FINANCE PLAN there have been several debates. On the 12th instant, Lord Castlereagh, at the close of a very long speech, in which he expressed his disapprobation of the new plan of the ministers, and in which he asserted, that the said plan, if persevered in, would *ruin* the country, moved no less than ten resolutions of his own, which resolutions will, in their proper place, be found in the Parliamentary Debates. Before men argue, they should, if possible, come to a perfect understanding as to the meaning of the words, expressive of the thing, upon which they are about to argue. For the want of this preliminary step, upon the occasion referred to, the reader of the debates in question is at great loss to form his opinion as to the consequences of the plan; for, we are not precisely informed, nor is it very easy for us to guess, what my Lord Castlereagh may mean by the words *national ruin*. These words our ancestors would have applied to a state of things, in which one-seventh part of the people were paupers; in which the poor rates levied upon the land amounted, upon an average, to twice the rack rent of the land; in which the tax upon the land was put up to public sale, part of every man's land being thus taken from him, while entails were broken in upon, and while part of the real property of the Church was alienated for ever; in which

every article of the necessaries of life was loaded with taxes; and in which a system of excise, with all its spies and informers, left no man's house for one hour safe from official invasion; in which every man was compelled to pay to the one-tenth part of his annual income, the man who had no income but what arose from an annuity for life, or from his labour, being obliged to contribute therefrom in the same proportion as a man whose income arose from a freehold estate, and, such being the regulations of the impost, that the taxers were authorised to impose upon each man a sum according to their pleasure, he being obliged to pay first and to appeal afterwards, being forbidden to call to his assistance any attorney or person learned in the law, and his appeal, in the last resort, being to the Judges alone, and not to a jury, and even to those Judges no other representation of his being permitted to be made, than that made by the taxers themselves. If such a state of things internal had been described to our forefathers, and, if, in addition thereunto, they had been told, that France had possessed herself of absolute sway in every country bordering upon the European seas, and that a large body of foreign troops were stationed in the heart of England, under the command of foreign officers; if such a state of things had been described to our forefathers, would they not have laughed in the face of a man, who should have expressed his apprehensions of approaching *national ruin*; and, especially, if those apprehensions arose from the adoption of a plan of finance, which would put, for the present, at least, a stop to the increasing progress of taxation? *Ruin* to the stockholders may yet come, and come it will; *ruin* to placemen and pensioners and sycophants and jobbers and speculators and nabobs may, and will, come; much confusion, and much suffering to many, may come; and, it is possible, that, from without, the lash of absolute personal slavery may reach us; but, as to *general* internal national ruin, it is, in my opinion, impossible that it can be more complete than it now is. Therefore, while I have, upon this score, no apprehensions for the future, I heartily thank the ministers for having given us, not *relief* (that is yet to come, and must come) but a pause in the progress of taxation.—On the 16th instant a long debate took place upon the Resolutions for the new plan, which were passed, without a division, and agreed to, in a committee of the whole house. On the 19th instant, after another debate, leave was given to bring in bills agreeably to the resolutions, which resolutions will be inserted in my next number, together, indeed, if I can

find room, with those of Lord Castlereagh. —Upon the future probable effects of this new plan we shall have time in plenty to remark hereafter. At present I shall only just notice one little confession, that dropped from Lord Henry Petty, "that the great benefit of the sinking fund, was, *not so much the hope it held out of extinguishing the debt, or paying the interest for which the public faith was pledged; but, the certainty it afforded of making stock a marketable commodity*, so that the stockholder, "go when he pleased into the market, "should find a purchaser for his stock." This is the true character and description of the sinking fund; but, it never was given to it before, that I recollect, except by myself. It is the vital principle of stock-jobbing. It is about eight millions a year raised upon the people for the purpose of keeping up the price of stock. It has no tendency whatever to *diminish the debt*; but, tends only to render borrowing more easy, by always providing a market for the stock. But, while his lordship makes this confession, let him no longer laugh at the old woman, who, in order to keep up the price of her eggs, gave her daughter money to come in' o the market to purchase them. Sir James Pulteney seemed to wish that the sinking fund should, altogether, be *diverted to the service of the year*. Ah! Sir James, that is just what I proposed, when the inscrutably profound Mr. Addington, now Lord Viscount Sidmouth (it is very proper in some people to change their names), at the outset of this war, said, that he should want to borrow only just as much every year as the sinking fund would pay off. "Well, Sir," said I, "then, why borrow any at all? Why not apply the sinking fund to the services of the year, during the war, and save the trouble and expense attending the making and the managing of new loans?" This was my proposition; and, would you believe it, Sir James, the Pittites actually called me an assassin, that wished to rip up the vitals of my country; and Mr. Sheridan asserted, that I wished to overthrow the government! No offence, however, do they seem to take at your proposition. You called yours a *plan*, Sir James, and a most excellent plan it is. I am decidedly for your plan. Bring it forward in a shape for regular discussion, and, if you do not put your opponents to shame, I will be content to pass for an idiot. —The part which the daily newspapers have taken as to the new plan is truly worthy of their general character. The papers under the controul, direct or indirect, of the ministry, have, of course applauded the plan,

not, however, upon the ground, that it will operate to the ease of the people, but, as a proof of the great wisdom of "his Majesty's confidential servants." The *Courier*, which seems to be all "the Opposition" can afford to maintain, thought, at first, that it must join in the general cry of approbation, especially as the Pittites did not venture to express a contrary sentiment. But *now* it has discovered, that the plan, "which," to use its own words, "gave such incontrovertible proof of the flourishing state of our financial concerns; that the plan, which had, in an instant, given the lie to all the gloomy predictions of Jack Cade" (meaning me, reader); "that the plan, which would effectually, and for ever, silence all our internal croakers, and that would plunge Buonaparté in despair; that the plan, which, coming in conjunction with the intelligence of the defeat of the French, had produced such universal joy and activity amongst all ranks of people, that the day on which the glad tidings arrived, though the anniversary of the death of the Blessed Martyr, was scarcely perceived to be a holy day:" this plan, this very plan, by this very same newspaper, is now described as the "offspring of sanguine and puerile folly;" as a "deception," as a "delusion;" as "a bait wherewith to catch unmerited popularity;" and, finally, as big with the utter and unnecessary "ruin of the country." —Such is the hireling daily press of London. There are, I see, two new daily papers, *the Aurora* and *the Pilot*. The name of the latter, considering the allusion which it will, unavoidably, be supposed to make, was very injudiciously chosen; but, as far as I have been able to learn, both are perfectly free from corrupt influence, and they contain, frequently, articles of great merit. —It is the daily press, with all the means that its senseless editors and greedy proprietors make use of to excite unnatural curiosity, and to inflame the public mind against every unfortunate creature that the law lays hold of: it is this press, which sticks at nothing to increase its pelf, that the nation is chiefly indebted to for the terrible calamity that beset the metropolis on Monday last, and which, besides the mortality and the bodily suffering that has been produced, has, of course, created, in every part of the kingdom, a degree of anxiety hardly to be described by the utmost powers of eloquence. When I reflect on the number of fathers and mothers, who had children in London, and who had not the means of speedily ascertaining whether or not those children were amongst the sufferers;

and when I reflect on the disgrace which such an occurrence casts upon the nation; can I forbear to execrate these stirrers-up of an unnatural and even a blood-thirsty curiosity? These detestable prints seem to delight in relating horrid deeds. They seem to delight in punishment. They frequently hunt, as in the case of Patch, a man from the first dawn of suspicion to the moment when his eyes are closed in the night of death. Were there upon earth a father so wicked as to wish to pervert the minds of his children, to make them incapable of distinguishing between good and bad, to render them at once profligate and greedy, servile and insolent by turns; in a word, to make them a disgrace and a curse to humanity, the most effectual means of succeeding in the diabolical wish would be to make them constantly read, and adopt what they read in the columns of the London daily press.—Begging the reader's pardon for having, thus, piled digression upon digression, I now return to the Proceedings in Parliament.—II. The subject of BARRACK ABUSES was revived by Mr. Robson, on the 18th instant. He repeated the first of his motions, made last year, and to be found, under the head of *Barrack Abuses*, in Volume X. He stated, "that, if his suggestions, upon this subject, had, at first, been acted upon, more than two millions would, thereby, have been saved to the public out of the hire of buildings, the repairs of buildings, and the rent of temporary barracks. In the Second Report of Military Inquiry there appeared a case which he should refer to in support of this assertion. It was there stated, that a *Mr. Page*, who became Barrack master at Winchester, in 1801, leaguering with a *Mr. Green*, a lawyer, bought a house, which had been before rented as a barrack, for £63. per ann. but which was not worth more than £30; after which the government had been charged £163. per annum for it. The whole sum that had been paid for this barrack, since the year 1791, amounted to £1779. though, according to the usual allowance to officers, only £83. 10s. ought to have been paid for it, as it did not appear that the barrack had been occupied by officers for more than one year of the whole term. This certainly called for inquiry. He begged also to call the attention of the House to the case of a Barrack called the Queen's Barrack, at Weymouth, which he had visited in the middle of September. This barrack contained 700, and sometimes 800 men, and though so great expence was incurred, the accommodations for the officers and men were extremely

bad. The building was in a low situation, in a narrow street, near a public brew-house, without any convenience of water, but from a pump, which was at a distance and often dry, and without any place for exercising a company, so that sixty guineas a year were paid for a piece of land, at a considerable distance, for that purpose. The stories of the building were but five feet high, and extremely inconvenient, and there were no drains to carry off the filthy water. He was sure, when he stated these circumstances, that his friends would not think him too anxious in pressing the inquiry. In bringing the question forward, he did not mean to impute blame to any man; the evil originated in a corrupt system, from which it had grown up to its present extent, and his Majesty's ministers say they had not yet had time to take the necessary measures for preventing the state of the barracks from being a reproach to the country. But when would that desirable day come? He knew not whether the barrack he had adverted to was rented or had been purchased, but his motion would reach that fact. It was unnecessary for him to state to the House the necessity of economy. He understood that the Barrack Department in Ireland was in as bad a state as in Great Britain, and he was the more alarmed at this, because he looked at the expenditure of that country in the gross, which was now nearly equal to the charge for Great Britain, and could not but reflect, that 15 seventeenths of whatever sums should be expended for barracks in Ireland, would be to be defrayed by taxes levied upon the people of this country."—Mr. Robson then made his motion, which Lord Howick, in the true Pitt manner, *opposed*, upon the ground of their being no necessity for it, as there were commissioners appointed to make the inquiry, and also upon the ground of the trouble which the acting upon the motion would give to the Barrack Department! Mr. Robson said, in reply, that the papers he called for could be produced in one day; and if not, that the House ought not to separate without an inquiry why, in a department in which five hundred and ninety-one persons were employed, the accounts could not be produced without delay? In his own defence he should state, that a motion which he had the honour to make last session, relative to one district, had had the effect of lowering the rents of barracks in that district one-half, and he had a right to expect a similar reduction in every other district."—The motion was rejected with-

out a *division*! And here, again, we see the reformer, the parliamentary reformer, Lord Howick!—The *Commissioners* will never come at the facts, which Mr. Robson has in contemplation. If his motions were agreed to, and honestly acted upon, they would produce a *disgorging* of not less than two millions of plunder. But, then, how many snug fortunes would this disturb! How many genteel families, the daughters of which are learning to play upon the piano forte, and the sons of which are receiving a *genteel* education, upon the strength of promises to be enabled to become blood-suckers as their fathers have been; how many nests of this sort would this cruel man ferret out!—Of Mr. Page and Harry Green of Winchester, the Barrack history is curious. It shall be related in a future number, when the public will see, that it was not in the regular course of *official* inquiry that the discovery was made.—III. Of the discussion relating to the WESTMINSTER PETITION I have thought it best to take notice in a letter addressed to the petitioners, and which letter will be found at the head of this sheet.—IV. To afford some relief to the SUGAR and RUM TRADE a bill has been brought into parliament to augment the duty upon brandy imported; and some regulations are to be adopted for the purpose of aiding the sale of sugar. This measure may do some little matter for the West Indians; but, in a national point of view, it is, I think, impossible that it should be attended with any benefit. It is like the sinking fund scheme; what is given with one hand is taken away with the other. There was, however, an observation or two made in the House of Commons, when the measure was proposed, that are worthy of attention. Mr. Rose (an old hand at this work), said, that the price of brandy being now about *seventeen shillings* a gallon, and the original cost being only about *half a crown*, all the rest being duty, any additional duty would be a temptation to *smuggling*; that is to say, it might tempt some unreasonable and wicked scoundrels to endeavour to get a gallon of brandy for half-a-crown, instead of nineteen shillings. “Aye,” said Lord Henry Petty, with all the vivacity and keenness belonging to his age and his office, “so it might, but his Majesty’s ministers have it in contemplation to reward those able and meritorious gentlemen, the excise and custom house officers, by allotting them a share in all the *prizes* they may make, whether by land or sea.” This is acting upon the true belligerent principle. It is treating the smugglers like alien enemies; and, surely, they ought so to be considered, when

they actually make war against the sacred principle, that it is the duty of every man to pay taxes, till he has not a shirt left to his back. But, our vigilant and vigorous chancellor does not stop here; for, in answer to apprehensions, expressed by Mr. Rose, during the debate upon the Finance Plan, that certain of the war-taxes, now to be mortgaged, would fall off in amount at the peace (for he really talked of *peace* in the usual strain!), our blithe Chancellor told him, not only of the above-mentioned scheme of encouraging the revenue officers to act with new vigour, but that, as a large *military* establishment would be necessary in time of peace, the *troops* might be employed upon the same service, and encouraged by the same means; and that, thus, the revenue and the military force would be a *mutual support to each other*! Loving and tender reciprocity! Blessed state, wherein for a people, who boast of their freedom, to exist! Pitts’ system was sharp enough; but, we have never yet seen the bayonet at the door of the brewhouse, the distillery, the wine vault, or the malt kiln. The taxgatherer and exciseman have, we know, the constable at their elbow and the soldier in reserve; but, hitherto, we have not, at any rate, seen them come actually at the head of a troop.—V. In the meanwhile, however, as it were for the purpose of reconciling the ignorant to this state of “*improvement*,” as his lordship called it, Mr. Whitbread is coming forward, in grand solemnity, with a new plan of POOR LAWS. Of this plan, as developed in the newspaper reports, I shall have much to say, upon a future occasion; at present I shall content myself with giving it as my decided opinion, that the scheme, except as far as it goes to do away the restrictions as to settlements, has in contemplation regulations the most absurd as well as most unjust that ever were conceived by mortal man. If a plan like this were really to be adopted, I, for my part, should not be at all surprised, if some one were to propose the selling of the poor, or the mortgaging of them to the fund-holders.—Aye! you may wince; you may cry Jacobin and Leveller as long as you please. I wish to see the poor men of England what the poor men of England were when I was born; and, from endeavouring to accomplish this wish, nothing but the want of the means shall make me desist. This is, indeed, an important subject; and, I promise, that it shall not be neglected by me.

SIR HOME POPHAM; the DELICATE INVESTIGATION; the CAPTURE OF CURACOA; and several other topics must be deferred till my next sheet.

## SUGAR TRADE.

*Concluded from page 224.*

If the present arrangements for this purpose are faulty, let them be amended; let the duties on the importation of foreign corn; the low duties as well as the high duties if necessary, be augmented. But, when it is proposed to permit the distillation of British sugar and molasses, which will put into the pockets of our own people some hundreds of thousands of pounds, now paid to foreigners to purchase materials for distillation, which we have cheaper of our own, let us not impute to that measure inconveniences, which a very small portion of skill and care will suffice to prevent, or, rather, which nothing less than a total want of skill and care can possibly permit to happen.—6. The old proportion between the duties on East Indian and West Indian sugars should be restored. For the protection of those Englishmen who had been encouraged to invest their capitals in the culture of sugar in the English West Indian islands, and to invite the investment of new capitals in the same object, and in adherence to the system of reciprocal monopoly, originally established in the commerce between Great Britain and those of her islands, while the duties on the sugar of those dependencies amounted, as I have already mentioned, to only 6s. 4d. per cwt, East Indian sugar was subjected to an *a valorem* duty of nearly £40 per cent, which operated as a total prohibition to the importation of it. But within the last thirty years, as we have seen, the duties on West Indian sugar have been raised to 27s. (and contingently to 30s.) per cwt, and the amount and assessment of the duty on East Indian sugars have likewise been completely changed, so that at present there is only a very trifling difference (less I think than half a crown per cwt.) between the two. In consequence of this, and of the increased expence of cultivating estates in our West Indies, the English planter is really liable to be driven out of the English market (and he is prohibited from seeking another) by the sugar of Hindostan. The quantity of the latter of late brought to England (according to the last account laid before the House of Commons, which I have seen) has not indeed been more than seven and twenty hundred tons annually; and several most intelligent directors have formally recorded in the books of the India House, their deliberate and decided opinion, that this branch of trade is adverse to the interests of the Company, and their protest against the extension of it. But neither this fact, nor the actual moderation of the import from India, affords any

permanent security to the English planter. The alteration in the proportion of the duties (like the similar alteration in the proportion of those on English runs and foreign spirits) was a gross breach of faith towards all those Englishmen, who had expended their money in cultivating our sugar islands, confidently relying on that effectual preference in the market, which had been held out to them by parliament, and recognised in numberless instances, during upwards of a hundred and twenty years. The alterations should therefore be rescinded, and the old proportion restored. This may now be easily effected, and without any just cause of complaint, or pretence of injury, on the part of the East-India Company: but by delay it may become difficult, nay, by a long delay it may even be rendered harsh towards that corporation, if they shall previously have much enlarged their dealings in sugar, in expectation of the continuance of the present rates.—7. It should be permitted, that the manufacture of sugar should be completed in the West-Indies, by that easy and almost costless process of refinery, of which the growers have the means. This act of natural justice would be of great benefit to the growers, to the consumers, and to the revenue; but as the developement of this matter would make this letter too long, I propose to make it the subject of a separate communication.—Thus, Sir, I have set forth several of the chief grievances, under which the owners of sugar estates in our West Indian islands labour; together with some obvious modes of relief, which may be safely and conveniently administered to their distresses. Most of these modes of relief, will in fact, be found to consist simply in a return to that wise system of mutually beneficial policy, in the dealings of Great Britain towards this class of her people, which had so long been maintained, and impliedly guaranteed by parliament; through confidence in the inviolability of which, Englishmen were induced to adventure their capitals on the other side of the Atlantic; and against which, strengthened as the fabric had been by the co-operating labours of successive legislatures in its support; consolidated as it was by the prosperous expirer of more than 120 years, and consecrated as it was by national faith; the rash wickedness of adventurous statesmen never till within these thirty years dared to raise their unhallowed hands. I have throughout endeavoured to avoid that tone of asperity and comitaton, which is so naturally excited from the feelings of men, who find themselves hurled, by a course of

injustice, of oppression, and of cruelty, from the enjoyments of patrimonial affluence, to the very threshold of beggary. I have good hopes in the justice and wisdom of the present administration; I look for proof of these in continuance of the proposed introduction of sugar into the distilleries, and in the steps they have taken to rescue our West Indian islands from their dependence for necessary food on provinces, which are known to be under the necessity of having recourse to other countries for part of their own food. By means of this dependence alone, which was established little more than 20 years ago, it is a known fact, that in one year, many thousands of persons perished by famine in the single island of Jamaica. One thing more I must however add. It is of the highest importance, that whatever may be done for our West-India proprietors, should be done on systematical principles, and so far as circumstances permit, with a view to permanency. For several years past, since their produce has been loaded with such enormous duties, and since the wise ancient policy, under which their prosperity and that of their countrymen so long went hand in hand, has been departed from by diminishing the drawback, by favouring foreign spirits, and by admitting East-Indian sugar, they have been in almost constant dread of impending ruin; and they have in consequence been compelled every twelve or fifteen months to teize the servants of the crown, for some new modification or correction of the mischiefs, which these experimental violations of the old and tried system have occasioned. In any case such a course of temporizing shifts and expedients is bad enough: in this particular case it is peculiarly odious. It has placed our West-Indian interest in a state of complete dependence on the ministry of the day; and it shocks our best feelings, by driving Englishmen of large hereditary possessions, of liberal educations, enlightened minds, and independent spirit, to dance attendance at the treasury (like the wretched aliens of France at Mr. Reeve's office), to beg the alms of some new connections interposition, which may for another year save themselves from a gaol, and their families from a poor-house.—X.X.

“*LEARNED LANGUAGES.*”

No. 8.

SIR,—Believing there is no enquiry respecting education of more importance than that which you have proposed, as to the utility of the learned languages; I hope you will give me room for a few lines, to state, what *the question is not*; that the *learned*

gentlemen of the two universities may not be puzzled. On some future occasion I shall trouble you with some observations, on what *the question is*. Believe me, Sir, it is in *your power* to lay this question for ever to rest: to make the profession of a knowledge of the learned languages, almost as ridiculous, as the profession of the belief in witchcraft.—*It is not a question* on the merit or demerit of the Greek or Latin authors; on which, however, much may be said that has never entered the imagination of the “heads of houses.” But this has no *necessary* connection with the present discussion. Whatever excellence they may contain, no one, in the least acquainted with the subject, can deny, that the *sense* of these writers may be conveyed through the medium of translations; and as for the *style*, if that cannot be *caught* by persons who have dedicated a great part of their lives to the study of those languages, and who have (in several instances), employed many years in the translation of particular works, how can it be expected of those, whose public or private duties, have not allowed them the same learned leisure? Either the translations of Demosthenes, for instance, by Francis or Leland, communicate to the English reader, a just idea of the sense and style of that great orator, or they do not. And, if the latter, how *very few* individuals can possibly have time or opportunity, to obtain the same degree of skill in the Greek languages, as these translators possessed.—If translations do convey enough of the meaning and spirit of the ancient authors, why should not a particular class of persons be so employed? Why should not a few curious scholars so occupy themselves for their own emolument, and the benefit, (if any,) of the public? This has been done with great success in the languages of the East; and would, perhaps, be one of the greatest benefits of the division of labour, which many suspect to be carried too far on other subjects.—But it may, I believe it has been, said, that although we can get by the means of translations, all that is valuable in the writings of the orators, philosophers, and historians of Greece and Rome, the *beauties of their poets* cannot be so communicated. Be it so. Where is the loss? Has not every variety of idea—every turn of expression, been adopted and naturalized by the poets of our own country? Is there not in the English language far more than enough of excellent poetry, than could occupy the leisure of the most unemployed? And who, but a pedantic fool, would not rather quote an agreeable or useful passage,

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from a language that would be equally understood by his hearers, whether assembled in the houses of parliament, or sitting in the domestic circle? S.

“*LEARNED LANGUAGES.*”

No. 9.

SIR,—You have thrown down the gauntlet of defiance, and I doubt not you will find many willing and able to take it up. The question itself is not new: long since parties have arranged themselves upon different sides, and displayed their respective reasonings with all the force they have been able. You have once more revived the controversy, by a bold and unqualified negation, couched in terms perhaps too general, but which will not, I apprehend, obscure your meaning. For my own part, Sir, in the general tendency of your opinion, I cordially agree with you: for I conceive the spirit of your objection to be against the *language* not the *literature* of the ancients; and the study of the *learned languages* (as they are exclusively called) merely with a view to ground arrogant pretensions of superiority upon, has ever appeared to me futile and even contemptible. The only true and valuable learning, as you justly observe, consists in the possession of knowledge, and in the power of communicating that knowledge: and in what manner the acquisition of the ancient languages can be deemed indispensibly necessary to this knowledge, I am at a loss to conjecture. *Things* and not *words* ought to be the primary concern of a rational being: and the former are to be obtained as well in an English as in a Latin or a Greek dress. I will take history as an example; for this species of composition is principally conversant about those subjects essential to general and useful knowledge.—The man who reads Livy, Tacitus, Sallust, Cæsar, Xenophon, Thucydides, &c. in their original language, comes forward with a haughty mien, with a scornful look, with a bloated self-importance, and boasts his *learning*: I grant, his learning is two-fold; he knows the facts, he knows also the languages in which those facts are narrated:—the man likewise who has read these authors in approved translations, or who has digested their essence in comprehensive compilations, may also step boldly forward with the conscious independence of merit, and with an unblanched countenance enter the lists with the more pompous linguist. I ask, in what does the boasted superiority of this latter consist? If in any thing it consists in this: where I read *citizen* he reads *civis*: where I read *and*, he reads *et*; where I read

a man of refined taste, he reads *homo emunctæ naris*; where I perhaps read *solid friendship* consists in the same desires, the same aversions, he probably reads *idem velle, idem nolle, firma amicitia est*: &c. &c. But, heavens! is this a knowledge upon which a man is to pride himself: is this school boy exercise of memory, this mechanical operation of the human faculties, to draw the line between genius and stupidity, between erudition and ignorance? Is not the real, the essential, the *useful* knowledge which we both possess equal? Is not my acquaintance with the general current of events, with the causes that produced them, with the consequences that resulted from them, as full, as complete, as beneficial as his? Am I not enabled to draw the same inferences? To make the same applications? To apply the same reasonings? Can I not estimate with the same accuracy the motives of the actors? Cannot I acquire the same general and accumulated stock of information? In fact, that useful knowledge which consists in the concentration of events for the purpose of applying them by way of comparison, illustration, or argument when needful, is possessed equally by both of us: and willingly may be resigned to the pedant, the empty, air-blown, frivolous fame of possessing two or three words for the same idea, where I have only one. Perhaps it may be said, my knowledge will not be so accurate, because translators may mistake the meaning of an author, or may wilfully pervert it: to the first objection I answer, I probably might be as mistaken as he, supposing I knew the original; owing to the obscurity and confusion in which many parts of the classics are involved: and, as to the second, allowing that a man may occasionally be so warped by prejudice or party as to purposely pervert the meaning of an author, yet this is not always the case, and others may be found who have more impartiality, for of almost all the classics there is more than one translation extant. What has been here said of history will apply equally to ethics, criticism, philosophy, dialectics, &c.—But with regard to poetry and eloquence, the case differs. Here the imagination, and not the judgment, is brought into play. We are to be amused, delighted, charmed, but not instructed. We are to rise from perusal, our ears tickled with harmonious versification, our fancies bewildered with beautiful imagery and apt similes, our minds loaded with metaphor, anaphora, metonymy, synecdoche, dactyls, spondee, iambs, pyrrhics, amphibrachs and a chaos of abstract personifications, which are indeed infinitely amusing and of-

ten enrapture the soul “lapping it in Elysium,” but which have no more real and necessary connection with substantial, useful knowledge, than an ear for music, an eye for painting, or a palate for *haut gout*. And even here the *utile* (forgive me, Sir, turning my back upon you for a moment) may be extracted from translations though certainly the *dulce* will evaporate. But these things are at best agreeable recreations for idle fancies: and the man who never read Horace, but in the imitations of Pope (by far the liveliest transcript of his manner) or Virgil, but in the translation of Dryden, or Homer, but in the version of the former, will have little reason to complain of his loss, while in addition, he has free access to the beauties of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Aken-side, and a host of native poets. And the same may be said of all works purely imaginative.—Thus far, Sir, you will perceive that my sentiments run pretty parallel with your own: but, I cannot assent unconditionally to the whole of your fulminations, and among others, that the learned languages as a part of education are “worse than useless;” for, since the current of opinion has set in so strongly in their favour, and they are often a medium of wealth, reputation, and dignity, on these considerations perhaps, we ought to view them with more lenity. The philosopher sees many things in the world which uncorrupt reason knows to be folly, but which the expediency of the times bids him sanction; and, among these probably, is the study of languages as the road to distinction.—This, Sir, is only an adumbration of the reasonings which might be brought forward upon this subject; and which I expect to see brought forward by yourself, when all your opponents have entered the field. Meanwhile, I should feel gratified by the insertion of the above, if it meet your approbation, and remain, Sir, &c.  
—ATTALUS.—*Liverpool, Feb. 1, 1807.*

“LEARNED LANGUAGES.”

No. 10.

SIR;—Your manly avowal of your sentiments, with regard to classical erudition, has drawn upon you a swarm of those minor scholars, who conscious of possessing neither talents nor knowledge, are still ambitious to retain the distinction of learning, upon the strength of a proficiency in the ancient languages. Amongst the most impertinent of these pretenders to literature, is your correspondent P. F. (No. 3) whose fatile arguments you have deemed unworthy of your notice. But, whilst you reserve the powers of your reason, your eloquence, and your

wit, to engage some mighty champion of the Universities; you may probably allow one of your humblest admirers, to endeavour to detect one at least of the numerous fallacies of your correspondent.—After mentioning, with deserved praise, many of the celebrated and erustite writers who adorned the age of Elizabeth; he states, that, you will probably oppose Shakespeare to these “illustrious persons.” “But,” continues he triumphantly, “he will be of no service to your cause, for it is allowed on all hands, that what he did was by dint of genius only; so, that where learning is the subject, he is quite out of the question.” It is upon this assertion, that I presume to trouble you with a few remarks. You have defined learning, to be the “possession of knowledge, and the faculty of communicating it to others;” and your correspondent seems tacitly to have agreed, that such is its true signification; and, surely, you never meant to exclude from that definition, the very ground work of all human wisdom, the knowledge of human nature. That our great poet, possessed this knowledge, and the power of imparting it, in the most eminent degree, few will venture to deny. The Book of Nature lay before him, and amply did it repay his studies. The knowledge of Shakespeare has been called intuitive, and those airy flights of imagination, that sublime, and beautiful fancy, which can picture unexisting beings, and transport us to other worlds, are, indeed, the peculiar gifts of heaven-born genius; but, that nice delineation of character, those minute, yet, striking traits, which bring the feelings of his heroes home to every bosom, can only be the effect of long and patient investigation, into the nature and habits of men; and, surely, this is learning in its highest sense; it is wisdom, and the experience of two centuries has confirmed its value.—Of the learned and illustrious authors of his own times, whom P. F. has opposed to Shakespeare, neither Hooker, Baron, nor Raleigh, can fairly be compared with him. The provinces of theology, and of science, are essentially different from that of poetry. One poet only has he mentioned, and hence, the comparison is surely in our favour; I should pity the taste of him who could prefer the affected rhapsodies of Sydney, to the natural and simple eloquence of Shakespeare. The only writer of that age, who can fairly be placed in competition with him, is Ben Johnson, a poet of no mean genius, and of great classical acquirements. He too affected to deplore the ignorance of his great rival; yet his productions, with one or two exceptions, are gradually striking

into Johnson, and chiefly valued as they contribute to elucidate some obscure passages in our immortal bard.—It is a favourite argument with the advocates of classical erudition, that an intimate acquaintance with the tongues of Greece and Rome, is necessary to a thorough understanding of our own. But, can they name one author, in the whole circle of English literature, who has so much enriched and beautified our language, as Shakespeare? Dr. Johnson, himself a most bigotted scholar, has adopted him as the most frequent authority in his Dictionary; and it is his English, the English of Pope, and of Addison, and not the gallicisms of Gibbon, or the pompous Latinisms of Johnson, that I would vindicate from the contempt of these classical innovators; and, I may venture to predict, that, as long as our despised, but beautiful, and expressive language exists, and long after the barbarous pedants of this age, shall have been forgotten, our poet of nature, shall continue to be the admiration, and the pride, of his countrymen.—I am, Sir, with great respect, &c.  
—R.—Feb. 10, 1807.

“LEARNED LANGUAGES.”

No. II.

SIR,—Although I am yet ignorant of the fate of my former essay on the Learned Languages, the insertion of which I could, indeed, willingly see superseded by the appearance of abler productions, I venture to communicate to you some further suggestions on the same subject. Were that essay now in my possession, I would retrench from it the introduction, which strikes me as peculiarly ostentatious; and correct some inaccuracies of expression that escaped me at the time, but of which you will be liberal enough not to take advantage. One strong reason for the study of the antient languages in order to understand our own, is, that with the exception of a few nouns and primitive verbs, our vocables are almost all taken, either mediately or immediately, from the Latin or Greek. This is no doubt an unfortunate circumstance, and has in great part originated in an extravagant attachment to the ancient languages. It is unfortunate, because it has rendered the understanding of our vernacular tongue an object of great difficulty; while the roots and primary significations of our words must be sought for in a foreign language; and while the length of carriage, if I may so speak, of these words and their endless associations in their progress, have given rise to an equally endless variety of acceptation. It would be indeed fortunate for us did we possess a lan-

guage like the Greek or the Germans, in which the most abstract and complicated words are composed from a few simple roots, which admit of an endless variety of combination; all of which combinations can be easily understood, because their constituent parts are universally familiar. Thus the Greeks could continually enrich their language without adding to its obscurity: an advantage which the Germans in a great measure also possess. But, whatever be the constitution of our language, it is with it as with our political constitution, though we now and then venture to suggest a repair or an amelioration, yet we must still preserve the old ground work. Now, I conceive, that the difficulty of understanding all of those words derived from the Latin, and more particularly from the Greek, nearly equals that of thoroughly understanding these languages. When a man knows a few roots in Greek, his labour is well nigh over; the endless combinations of these roots with a little attention and judgment, are easily resolved; but from this the mere English scholar is precluded, and his memory is loaded with a multiplicity of words, that present no sensible hold, and can almost never be universally retained. The Dictionary must be continually on his table. Any one who has witnessed the progress of anatomical students will testify, that those unacquainted with the original languages of the nomenclature, are presented with almost unsurmountable obstacles in its acquisition; while those who are acquainted with the sources find little difficulty. The same observation applies nearly to the whole circle of science. Mixing in the world and general reading will not of themselves enable a young man to form accurate conceptions of the import of words; the general acceptation he may, indeed, in some sort thus acquire; but, if he would attain precision and avoid ambiguity, the Lexicographer either of our own or other languages must be frequently consulted.—  
J. B.—K.—Edinburgh, Feb. 18, 1807.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPERS.

RECAPTURE OF BUENOS AYRES. *From the London Gazette. Downing-street, January 27, 1807.*

The attempt was accordingly commenced, on the 28th, by the navy; but the water proving too shallow to admit of the ships coming sufficiently near to cannonade it with effect, a further effort was necessarily given up.—Upon this I deemed it advisable, with the co-operative concurrence of Sir H. Popham, to take possession of the town of Maldonado, as a favourable position for the purpose of refreshing the troops,

mounting my cavalry, and carrying on such other arrangements as might thereafter appear most necessary.—Now a moment was lost; and, accordingly, on the evening of the 29th, I landed with about 400 men, composed principally of a part of the 38th Regiment, under Col. Vassal, and advanced against the town, which seemed to be occupied by about 600 Regulars and Militia, mostly mounted, with 1 howitzer, and 1 long 47 pounder field-piece, both brass.—Notwithstanding we were without any artillery, the enemy were soon dispersed, with the loss of their guns, and about 50 men killed and wounded. The loss on our side was 2 killed and 4 wounded, of His Majesty's 38th Regiment.—To cool the intrepidity of our little column on this occasion much praise is due, as it advanced, with the utmost steadiness and alacrity, and without firing a shot, until sufficiently near to make a certainty of carrying both the guns and the town, which was principally done by the bayonet, notwithstanding the advance was made under heavy discharges of grape and musketry.—To the well-known gallantry and ability of Col. Vassal, I feel myself much indebted; and the conduct of every other Officer in the field has commanded my thanks.—At day-break, yesterday morning, I detached Col. Vassal to take possession of the heavy batteries on the beach of the harbour, and on the Peninsula, which precluded any communication for the enemy between the main land and the strong island and post of Goretti, situated in, and much commanding, the bay of Maldonado, and which, in consequence, in the course of the day, surrendered at discretion, to a summons sent from Sir H. Popham, and thereby prevented the necessity of carrying it by storm, and the consequent bloodshed that might have ensued. During yesterday and this morning, the chief part the remainder of the troops have been landed, and I have already contrived to mount nearly one half of my cavalry.—The Wellington transport being directed to sail immediately to England, I have taken the liberty of addressing this short account of my proceedings directly to you, Sir H. Popham having represented to me his inability to dispatch a vessel at this time to the Cape of Good Hope, precluding me the power of making my report through the regular channel of Lt. Gen. Sir D. Baird.—I ought not to omit to mention the very steady and praise-worthy conduct of a small party of Marines and armed Seamen, sent on shore by Sir H. Popham, who joined and

composed part of our column, on its way into the town, and occupied such positions as were allotted to them during the night, in such a correct manner, as to reflect the greatest credit both on the officers that commanded them, and their own zeal and discipline.—I should also be wanting in justice to my own feelings, if I closed my dispatch, without acknowledging the services I have received from Lt. Col. Brownrigg, and Major Trotter of the 83d Regt. acting Deputy-Adjutant-Genl. to the Forces at present under my command. And I also beg leave to acknowledge the assistance afforded me by Major Tucker, of the 72d regt. who, by permission of Lt. Gen. Sir D. Baird, is with me on this occasion, and acting in the capacity of Military Secretary.—I herewith have the honour to inclose the return of such ordnance, ammunition, and stores, as have yet been discovered.—I have the honour to be, &c. J. T. BACKHOUSE, Lieut. Col. 47th. Reg.

Return of the killed and wounded of the Troops under the command of Lieut. Col. Backhouse, in the attack of Maldonado, on the 29th of Oct. 1806.—38 Reg. 2 rank and file killed, 4 rank and file wounded.

(Signed) W. R. TROTTER.

Return of Ordnance, Ammunition, and Stores, &c. taken from the enemy, in the town and vicinity of Maldonado, and island of Goretti, on the 29th of Oct. 1806.

Brass Ordnance. 1 Six-inch howitzer, with ten rounds of ammunition: 1 Six-pounder, with ten rounds of ditto.—Iron Ordnance. 12 26-pounders on Sea Batteries. 20 24-pounders on the Island of Goretti. 700 Muskets. 200 Pistols. 300 Swords. 108 Barrels of Powder. (Signed) A. WATSON, Capt. R. M. Artillery.—N. B. The above is the most correct return I have yet been able to collect.

(Signed) W. R. TROTTER, A. Gen.

Admiralty-Office, Jan. 27, 1807.—Dispatches, of which the following are copies, have been received at this Office from Commodore Sir Home Popham, addressed to William Marsden, Esq.

His Majesty's ship Diadem, Rio de la Plata, Aug. 25, 1806.—SIR,—When the events of war cease to be favourable to any armament, I consider it the duty of commanding officers to state all the circumstances under their knowledge or information, with clearness and perspicuity, which, either progressively or suddenly, led to a reverse of fortune.—In pursuing this course, I feel confident I shall be able to satisfy the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the liberal and beneficent principles upon which

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the government of Gen. Beresford was conducted, do more honour to his Majesty's arms, and the character of G. Britain, than if he had resorted to expedients completely within his power, which would have effectually annihilated all the efforts of the enemy, and wrested, probably for ever, these countries from the crown of Spain.—Pueridon, one of the municipality, appears to have been the greatest organ of the revolution. He applied himself with great art and address in preparing the people for a general insurrection.—The arms in the town were secreted, ready for the moment of action; the discontented assembled every night, and attended to his instructions; and he raised all the rabble of the country, by the ample supplies of money with which he was furnished on the north side of the River. Col. Liniers, a French officer in the Spanish service, and on his parole, successfully employed himself in collecting people at Colonia.—Terror was established, and every person who refused to contribute his assistance to this conspiracy, was threatened with immediate death.—I have traced this from very unquestionable authority, and so rapid was the progress of the revolution, when it first shewed itself, that it was not till the 31st July that I learned by a dispatch from the general, which reached me at Ensenada, on my return from Monte Video, that he was apprehensive, from the information he received, an insurrection would shortly be made.—I heard at the same time from Capt. Thomson, that 17 of the enemy's vessels had just arrived at Colonia, and it was reported that force was still to be increased from Monte Video, I sent orders for the Diomedes to be brought to Ensenada, and for Capt. King, of the Diadem, to come up with the remaining few marines, the two companies of blues, and as many other men as could, in any degree, be spared from the ships, for the purpose of arming some vessels to attack the enemy at Colonia, as it was impossible to prevent his crossing from the north shore whenever the wind was fair.—On the 1st of Aug. in the afternoon, the Leda anchored off Buenos Ayres, about 12 miles distant; and on my landing on the 2d, which I did as soon as the weather would admit of a boat getting on shore, I found the general had just made a very successful attack on about 1500 Spaniards, under Pueridon, 5 leagues from the town, with 500 men, in which he took all the enemy's cannon (I think 9 pieces) and several prisoners.—On the 3d, I attempted to return to the Leda, in the Encounter, which Capt. Honeyman brought within a few miles of the shore for this purpose, as it

blew very strong: but the wind freshened so considerably from the eastward, that we could not get to windward.—On the 4th, in the morning, it was very thick weather, and the gale increased so much, that it was impossible to weigh.—About noon, Capt. King arrived in a galivat, with 150 men from the Diadem, for the purpose of arming and commanding the few small vessels we had collected in the harbour; but he was not able to get there till the following day.—On the 5th, in the morning, it moderated, and I reached the Leda, when I received a report from Capt. Thomson, that in the gale of the preceding day, the enemy had crossed from Colonia totally unobserved by any of our ships, except the schooner under the command of Lieut. Herrick, who was lying in the narrow gut leading to Couchas and St. Isidro; but the easterly wind had thrown so much water in the river, that the enemy were enabled to cross over any part of the Parmas Bank, without the necessity of making a greater detour, by going higher up the river.—On the 6th and 7th it blew a hurricane; the Leda was lying in four fathoms, with two anchors down, and her yards and topmasts struck.—On the 8th I heard from Capt. King, that 5 of our gun boats had foundered at their anchors; that the Walker had lost her rudder; and that the launches and large cutters of the Diadem and Leda were lost.—The torrents of rain that fell during the 6th, 7th, and 8th, had rendered the roads totally impracticable for any thing but cavalry, and consequently, Gen. Beresford was most seriously disappointed in his determination to attack the enemy at a distance from the town; in which, had it taken place, I entertain no doubt that his army would have added another trait of its invincible spirit under his dispositions.—The enemy, however, by his inexhaustible supply of horses, suffered little inconvenience from the state of the roads, and he was, therefore, enabled to approach the town by several directions, without giving the British army any opportunity to attack him.—On the 10th, in the evening, the Castle was summoned, and on the following day I landed, while our remaining vessels were firing on the Spanish posts, and I learned that, exclusive of the Spanish army, which was divided into many columns, occupying the various avenues of the town, the inhabitants were all armed, and sheltered on the tops of the houses and churches, with a design of carrying on a war of ambush.—Under these circumstances, and the manifest disposition of the enemy to prevent an engagement, it was determined to embark the

wounded that night, and cross the Rio Chel-lo, for the purpose of moving towards Ensenada; but this measure was, in a great degree, frustrated by the weather, which became very violent during the night, and consequently retarded the progress of embarkation, though the enemy added a considerable number of men to the houses and churches near the Castle, and advanced by all the streets, not under the influence of its fire; in short, Sir, his object was to avoid, by every means, a general action, and to place his men in such a situation that they could fire at our troops, while they remained in perfect security themselves.—On the 12th, at day light, I understand a smart fire began from the enemy's advanced posts, but was soon returned with great effect from our artillery, which was planted towards the principal streets leading to the Great Square, and for a short time the enemy, by his immense numbers, shewed a greater degree of firmness than on any other occasion, and pushed forward with 3 pieces of artillery, which Colonel Pack, of the 71st, soon charged and took from him. During this time, however, reinforcements crowded the tops of all the houses commanding the Great Square from the back streets, and our troops were considerably annoyed by people they could not get at. The enemy commanded the Castle in the same way, with the additional advantage of a gun on the top of one of the churches, which I consider an idelible stigma against the character of the Bishop, not only from his situation, but the professions he made.—I can easily conceive how the feelings of Gen. Beresford must, at this moment, have been on the rack; disappointed in his last efforts to induce the enemy to a general engagement in the Great Square, his gallant little army falling fast by shots from invisible persons, and the only alternative which could present itself to save the useless effusion of so much valuable blood, was a flag of truce, which was hoisted at the castle about one o'clock.—In an instant, there were near 10,600 men in the Great Square, pressing forward, in the most outrageous manner, to get into the fort, and even firing at our men on the ramparts; so much so, that it was with extreme difficulty the British troops were prevented revenging this insult; indeed the general was obliged to tell the Spanish officers, if their men did not retire in the course of one minute, he must, as the only measure of safety, haul down the flag of truce, and recommence hostilities;

this firmness had the desired effect, and he then sent his conditions to the Spanish general, and they were instantly acceded to.—I inclose a copy of the capitulation, and I trust the high and independent language in which it is couched, and the terms dictated by General Beresford to an officer at the head of myriads of people, will do him infinite honour in England, and obtain for him his Majesty's most gracious approbation.—I have received and annexed a return of the killed, wounded, and missing, by which it appears that there are two officers, two serjeants, one drummer, forty-three rank and file killed; eight officers, seven serjeants, ninety-two rank and file wounded, and nine missing; making a total of one hundred and sixty-five; scarce any of those misfortunes were occasioned, except from the inhabitants on the tops of the houses and the churches.—The enemy confesses to have lost about seven hundred killed and wounded, in the short conflict in the streets; and if it had not been for the inhabitants, I have little doubt that the Spanish troops would have been completely defeated, although seven times the number of the British forces.—Nothing is more difficult than to give their lordships an idea of the number of men in arms; but from the best accounts we can obtain, it is thought Pueridon, and the other principle people engaged in this plot, had collected from eight to ten thousand men in the country; that Liniers may have brought over from eight hundred to one thousand; and the town furnished, though armed in various ways, about ten thousand, under the secret arrangements of the magistrates.—When every vessel that could escape from Buenos Ayres had joined, I proceeded towards Ensenado, to receive the detachment of marines; Lieut. Groves, of the *Diadem*, was obliged to quit the *Belem* schooner, as she would not work out; one gun boat and a settee, a prize, were also left in the harbour, with the *Justina*, a small English merchant ship that had followed the expedition from St. Helena. Capt. Thomson of the *Nep-tune*, who was in the castle, was made a prisoner, and Lieut. Burgh, of the *Rais-onable*, with Mr. Ramsay, a midshipman, and seven men, who were in the settee, as her boats could not hold them. Lieut. Her-rick, in the *Dolores*, the other armed schooner, worked out in a manner which, coupled with his conduct on the whole of this business, does him great credit.

*To be continued.*